



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
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DVA COVID-19 Update: January 29, 2021

The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Healthcare Center (HCC) has two COVID-19 positive Veteran Patients in the HCC Isolation Unit with one new case of a COVID-19 positive Veteran Patient this week, the first in more than three weeks, and a Veteran Patient who initially tested positive a month ago and retesting positive on January 13, 2021, while at an acute care facility and who returned to the HCC this week. Three Veteran Patients are in self-isolation for monitoring as they recently returned from acute care or other community based healthcare facilities. These Veterans have tested negative for the virus but are in the self-Isolation Unit out of an abundance of caution until clinically cleared for release. The HCC continues weekly testing of all Veteran Patients and this week all Veteran Patients, outside the Isolation Unit, tested negative for the virus.

The DVA Residential Facility had no new cases of COVID-19 Veteran Residents in the past month and there are no Veteran Residents remaining in the COVID-19 positive section of the Isolation Unit and one Veteran Resident is in the protective monitoring Non-COVID section of the Isolation Unit. Veterans in non-COVID-19 Isolation/Quarantine are either new admissions, patients who recently returned from acute care or contact tracers who have tested negative for the virus and remain in the Isolation Unit until cleared by clinical staff for release to their regular rooms. The DVA continues testing of all Residential Veterans twice per month with additional testing of Veteran Vocational Therapeutic Program participants. To date the DVA has tested two hundred and thirty-nine Veteran Residents and Patients (most multiple times) for COVID-19 with sixty-nine testing positive or retesting positive since March 2020. Of those testing positive, sixty-two recovered from the virus. Two Veterans are in the HCC Isolation and Recovery Unit, one Veteran Resident and two Veteran Patients passed away in the spring due to COVID-19 and two Veteran Patients passed away in December and January from COVID-19 complications. One Veteran Patient with COVID-19 passed away last month from a non-COVID-19 related medical occurrence.

The DVA continues weekly COVID-19 testing of direct care and front-line staff until further notice. A total of fifty-seven staff members tested positive for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic. Fifty-two DVA staff members have recovered and returned to work and five are in various stages of home isolation or clinical care until cleared to return to work consistent with CDC and DPH guidelines.

The DVA continues to administer vaccinations with just over eighty-five percent of our Veteran Residents and Patients and one-hundred and twenty-three of our DVA Healthcare and other direct care providers vaccinated to date. We held a vaccination clinic this week and have additional vaccine clinics scheduled for Veterans and Staff over the next few weeks with a focus on establishing "herd immunity" among our Veterans and staff. The DVA is also working with state agencies and community based non-profit healthcare providers to expend vaccination capacity in Connecticut through training of vaccinators and the possibility of establishing a mass-vaccination site at the DVA Campus in Rocky Hill.

The DVA staff, with the support of our Federal VA partners and other state agencies continue the hard work of meeting and overcoming the challenges of this pandemic in order to keep Veterans and staff safe. The DVA COVID-19 Mitigation Protocols, previous COVID-19 weekly updates and other important information is available at: <https://portal.ct.gov/DVA/Pages/DVA-COVID-19-Updates>.